

# FEES AND CHARGES REPORT

## APPENDIX 8 - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

### 1. Service description

The Planning and Development service has several Fees and Charges namely:

- **Planning application fees** – statutory set fees by Central Government that are dependent upon type of application and development. The fees were last increased in December 2023<sup>1</sup> (prior to that, January 2018 and November 2012). The 2023 changes had the effect of increasing planning fees by 35% for applications for major development and 25% for all other planning applications. They also introduced an automatic, annual increase. This will increase planning fees annually, on 1 April each year, starting on 1 April 2025. All planning fees will be increased by the rate of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index from the preceding September. The increase will be capped at 10%, even if the inflation rate is higher. The fees will not be changed if there is negative inflation (deflation). The Government says it will publish the schedule of new fees in advance of April each year, from April 2025.
- **Pre application advice** – a non-statutory optional, enhanced service to encourage early engagement, improve customer experience and reduce time spent on invalid applications by identifying potential issues prior to plan submission, encouraged by National Planning Practice Guidance and policy. Pre-application engagement and “front-loading” is actively encouraged by national planning policy. Fees for this service can be set locally by WLDC.
- **New Fee from 2025/2026 – Application Check for Validation**

A new fee been proposed by a member of the Validation Team, as an optional service that we believe would benefit both customers and the service in processing and ensuring that planning applications made to the Authority are valid.

Making a planning application is an increasingly complex process. An applicant needs to provide a completed application form, the correct application fee and fully comply with the national information requirements set by legislation. Whilst not mandatory, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also requires that local planning authorities publish a list of their own information requirements for applications. Following adoption of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP) in 2023, the Central Lincolnshire Authorities set a Local List for Validation. This sets out up-front the required information

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<sup>1</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023](#)

an application will need to meet the policies of the CLLP - including Energy statements, Biodiversity Net Gain information and flood risk assessments. This ensures an application is not made "valid" and progressed unless the required information has been provided upfront - rather than result in delays during the consideration of the application.

We employ 2FTE technical officers whose primary role is to check an application upon receipt, to ensure the form is correctly completed, the correct fee is submitted, and the required documents and drawings are supplied. However, with the increasing complexity of applications, a large percentage of applications are found to be invalid upon submission. This may lead to frustration on the part of the applicant - and requires resources as the dedicated Technical Officers liaise with applicants in order that they can provide the required information. A Technical officer has proposed the introduction of an optional "passport-check" style service. For a fee, the applicant can have a dedicated 1 to 1 with a Technical Officer to walk through their application before they submit it. This has been tested informally and well received by the applicant who has felt it helpful. It is therefore recommended to offer an optional Pre-application "Validation Check" service - fees would be tiered between householder / small-medium developments / major developments, in reflection of the increasing complexity of the application types.

This will assist both the applicant, with a direct, personal service, but also the Service as it will allow quicker validations of applications which can then be referred on to the Planning Case officer and publicised for public comment.

- WLDC adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) at Council on 13 November 2017. The implementation of CIL took place on 22 January 2018 which means that any qualifying planning decision made after this point is subject to a CIL charge. As a result, CIL is charged on most new residential dwellings and (convenience) retail buildings over 100m<sup>2</sup> to ensure that development contributes towards the infrastructure needed to support growth in West Lindsey.

## **2. Prior years analysis, current financial year projections**

The tables below illustrate the levels of income received 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 and the latest forecast for 2024/2025.

Income achieved	2021/22 Actual (£)	2022/23 Actual (£)	2023/24 Actual (£)	2024/25 Forecast (£)
Pre-application Fee Income	(94,270)	(49,865)	(84,557)	(65,000)
Budget	(67,700)	(71,700)	(72,500)	(65,000)
Income Achieved (Above)/Below Budget	(26,570)	21,835	(12,057)	-

Income achieved	2021/22 Actual (£)	2022/23 Actual (£)	2023/24 Actual (£)	2024/25 Forecast (£)
Planning Fees Income	(968,498)	(1,060,513)	(771,363)	(1,174,500)
Budget	(900,000)	(945,000)	(987,200)	(1,174,500)
Income Achieved (Above)/Below Budget	(68,498)	(115,513)	215,837	-

CIL contributions are excluded from the figures in the table above. For a full CIL summary please refer to the infrastructure funding statement published on West Lindsey District Council's website at:

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning/community-infrastructure-levy-cil>

### 3. Price

**Planning Application Fees** - The CPI rate as of September 24 is 1.7%. An inflationary increase of 2.5% has already been applied to the 2025/2026 budget therefore the impact on the MTFP is a reduction in income. This is pending official confirmation from Parliament of the amended fees schedule, which will be reported to Committee once received.

**Pre Application Fees** - The proposal is for the pre-application advice fees to be increased by inflation at 3.5% rounded to the nearest pound. Those fees that are not fully cost recoverable will be increased by 6% with an aim to achieve full cost recovery over time.

There has been a continued focus on reducing overhead service costs through more efficient practices. Planning files are now digital / online, and measures are in place to reduce the demand for site visits, and the service is in the process of securing a new Development Management operating system with the intention of making further efficiencies.

### 4. Understanding Customers and Markets

During the current financial year, the strategic growth agenda has continued to focus on developing key relationships with landowners and developers to restore

confidence in the local housing market. Collaborating with partners such as the HCA, the Council has sought to gain a much-improved understanding of the local viability pressures that have impacted upon delivery in the past and coupled with this the Council is investing heavily in regeneration and commercial projects. At the service level this requires an effective and engaged Development Management service working closely with all these partners to make sure that the Planning service is fit for purpose and reflects modern industry development needs.

The focus on improving performance for our customers has ensured that the service has developed with a much sounder understanding of their needs. For instance, the service introduced a simplified “Do I need planning permission?” enquiry for the benefit of customers in 2019. It is important that successes such as the restored confidence in our pre-application advice service are not undermined by unnecessarily high increases or that we lose our share of this service to the private sector, which is why a fee increase based on inflation only is proposed.

## **5. Proposed Charges**

Planning fees in England are set nationally by the Government<sup>2</sup>. The fees were last amended in December 2023, where fees were increased by 35% (major developments) or 25% (all other developments). This was the first update since January 2018. The December 2023 changes also introduced an annual automatic increase by the rate of inflation, commencing in April 2025 (capped at 10% and no negative inflation (deflation) changes).

The 2023 legislation also removed the “free go” for repeat applications. Previously, where a previous application has been approved, refused or withdrawn, no fee was payable for a repeat application if the proposed development was of the same character and on the same site as the earlier application, submitted by the same applicant and submitted within 12 months of the earlier decision (or the received date in the case of a withdrawn application). This no longer applies to applications made post- December 2023.

The 2023 legislation also reduced the “planning guarantee” from 26 weeks to 16 weeks for non-major development applications (major applications remain at 26 weeks). Under the Planning Guarantee, the local planning authority must return the application fee if the application has not been determined within the time period and a written agreement to extend the time period has not been agreed with the applicant.

The new Government, following its election in July 2024, has made planning reform a key priority. On 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024 it launched a consultation on its planned reforms to planning policy and practice. The consultation includes a chapter on “*Changes to*

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<sup>2</sup> Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

*Planning Application Fees and Cost Recovery for local authorities related to Nationally Significant infrastructure Projects*<sup>3</sup>.

The consultation acknowledges that “*Current planning fee levels do not generate enough income to cover the full cost of some planning applications*” and that they “*want to reduce this funding shortfall by ensuring that planning application fees cover the estimated costs to local planning authorities of determining those applications.*”

It seeks views on increasing householder application fees up to £528 (currently set at £258) to achieve full cost recovery. It also seeks views on whether any current fees are inadequate, or there is scope to introduce a fee where one is not currently charged.

It also seeks views on whether local authorities should be able to set their own planning fees (whether in full, or partial), and measures for local authorities to achieve full cost recovery when engaging with nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs).

For non-statutory charges, the Planning Service proposes to apply an increase equivalent to inflation at 3.5% rounded to the nearest pound. Those fees that are not fully cost recoverable will be increased by 6% with an aim to achieve full cost recovery over time.

CIL charges were proposed by WLDC prior to adoption and were subject to consultation. As part of this process, they were subject to a public examination by the Planning Inspectorate, following the development of viability evidence and extensive consultation. Council then formally adopted these. As such these rates cannot be subject to change without new viability evidence being collated, public consultation and another full examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

The Planning Service are seeking to set ambitious targets but do not want to frame the service in an unrealistic light as significant change to the Planning system is proposed by the Government over the forthcoming years.

## **6. Impact on Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)**

This table includes the impact on the MTFP. The fee schedule will be updated with the revised statutory fees and reported to Committee once the Government have released them.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system#chapter-11--changes-to-planning-application-fees-and-cost-recovery-for-local-authorities-related-to-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects>

The CPI rate as of September 24 is **1.7%**. An inflationary increase of 2.5% has already been applied to the 2025/2026 budget therefore the impact on the MTFP is a reduction in income.

	2025/26 (£)	2026/27 (£)	2027/28 (£)	2028/29 (£)	2029/30 (£)
Current Budget in MTFP	(1,272,600)	(1,306,700)	(1,341,700)	(1,377,700)	(1,377,700)
Proposed Budget - Pre Application Fees	(66,600)	(68,300)	(70,000)	(71,700)	(73,500)
Proposed Budget - Application Fees	(1,194,500)	(1,222,000)	(1,247,700)	(1,273,900)	(1,300,700)
Impact on MTFP 2025/26 Pressure/ (Saving)	11,500	16,400	24,000	32,100	3,500

## 7. Recommendation

Members are asked to approve the charges for 2025/2026 as illustrated in the schedule below – **the statutory planning fees are omitted pending release by Government:**

2024/25	Proposed Increase / (Decrease)		2025/26	VAT Amount	2025/26 Charge Inc. VAT	VAT Rate
	£	% Type or £				

Development								
Householder development - do I need planning permission?		£37.50	11.1%	£4.17	£41.67	£8.33	£50.00	S
Householder development including alterations, extensions and outbuildings (this fee would also include establishing whether an application is required and any listed building consent enquiry if applicable)		£99.17	5.9%	£5.83	£105.00	£21.00	£126.00	S
Non-residential changes of use including siting of caravans for sites under 1 ha or buildings under 1,000 m2 (gross)		£212.50	5.9%	£12.50	£225.00	£45.00	£270.00	S
Non-residential changes of use including siting of caravans for sites of 1 ha or above or buildings of 1,000 m2 or above (gross)		£371.67	6.1%	£22.50	£394.17	£78.83	£473.00	S
Development of 1-9 dwellings including changes of use to residential	1st dwelling	£255.00	5.9%	£15.00	£270.00	£54.00	£324.00	S
	Additional dwellings	£142.50	3.5%	£5.00	£147.50	£29.50	£177.00	S
Development of 10-49 dwellings including changes of use to residential	10th dwelling	£1,534.17	3.5%	£53.33	£1,587.50	£317.50	£1,905.00	S
	Additional dwellings	£75.83	3.3%	£2.50	£78.33	£15.67	£94.00	S
Development of 50 or more dwellings	minimum fee	£4,598.33	3.5%	£160.84	£4,759.17	£951.83	£5,711.00	S
Non-residential development where no floor space is created.		£136.67	6.1%	£8.33	£145.00	£29.00	£174.00	S
Non-residential development up to 499 m2 floor area, or 0.5 ha site area		£186.67	5.8%	£10.83	£197.50	£39.50	£237.00	S
Non-residential development between 500 and 999 m2 floor area, or between 0.51ha and 1.0 ha.	For 500 m2 or 0.51ha	£280.83	5.9%	£16.67	£297.50	£59.50	£357.00	S
	Each additional 100 m2 or 0.1 ha	£142.50	3.5%	£5.00	£147.50	£29.50	£177.00	S
Non-residential development between 1,000 and 4,999 m2 floor area, or between 1.1ha and 2.0ha.	For 1,000 m2 or 1.1ha	£962.50	6.0%	£57.50	£1,020.00	£204.00	£1,224.00	S
	Each additional 100 m2 or 0.1 ha	£72.50	3.4%	£2.50	£75.00	£15.00	£90.00	S
Non-residential development of 5,000 m2 or more or 2.1ha or more.	Minimum fee	£3,913.33	3.5%	£136.67	£4,050.00	£810.00	£4,860.00	S
	additional fee subject to complexity of proposal	£0.00			£0.00			
Variation or removal of condition.		£99.17	5.9%	£5.83	£105.00	£21.00	£126.00	S
Advertisements		£99.17	5.9%	£5.83	£105.00	£21.00	£126.00	S
Non-householder listed building consent		£193.33	6.0%	£11.67	£205.00	£41.00	£246.00	S
Additional site visit		£168.33	3.5%	£5.84	£174.17	£34.83	£209.00	S
Hazardous Substances		£93.33	6.3%	£5.84	£99.17	£19.83	£119.00	S
<b>Application Check for Validation</b>								
Householder/Adverts	Householders				£50.00	£10.00	£60.00	S
Minor Developments (Up to 9 dwellings; commercial floorspace <1000sqm; site < 1Ha)					£100.00	£20.00	£120.00	S
Major Developments (10 or more dwellings; commercial floorspace of 1000sqm or more; site is 1Ha or more)	Majors				£150.00	£30.00	£180.00	S

**N.B.**

1. The fee for a mixed use developments would be derived from the total of the fees for all elements.
2. Agricultural development and telecommunications are not included as they have their own national notification procedures which dictate whether there is an pre-application process fee or not.
3. Cross boundary pre-application fees will be based upon the amount of development in each authority (if a dwelling straddles the boundary, the authority with the majority its floor space will receive the fee for that dwelling).

Prosperous Communities Committee

Planning

		2024/25		Proposed Increase / (Decrease)		2025/26		VAT Amount	2025/26 Charge Inc. VAT	VAT Rate
		£	% Type	or £	£	£	£	£		
Paper copies of plans, drawings and documents	per side of A4	£0.29	3.5%	£0.01	£0.30	£0.00	£0.30	OS		
	per side of A3	£0.61	3.5%	£0.02	£0.64	£0.00	£0.64	OS		
	per side A2, A1, A0	£7.42	3.5%	£0.26	£7.68	£0.00	£7.68	OS		
Requests for Planning Information		£72.50	3.4%	£2.50	£75.00	£15.00	£90.00	S		
Entry onto Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing Register		£55.00	5.5%	£3.00	£58.00	£0.00	£58.00	OS		
Public Path Orders, i.e. Diversion Orders	Minimum charge	£652.00	3.5%	£23.00	£675.00	£0.00	£675.00	OS		
	Maximum charge	£1,949.00	3.5%	£68.00	£2,017.00	£0.00	£2,017.00	OS		

Prosperous Communities Committee

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

		2024/25		Proposed Increase / (Decrease)		2025/26		VAT Amount	2025/26 Charge Inc. VAT	VAT Rate
		£	% Type	or £	£	£	£	£		
<b>CIL Charging Schedule - residential charging zones (charge per m<sup>2</sup>)</b>										
Zone 1 Lincoln Strategy Area (LSA)	Flat rate subject to indexation annually, 01st January using published RICS CIL Indexation Rate	£25.00	0.0%	£0.00	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	OS		
Zone 2 Non Lincoln Strategy Area		£15.00	0.0%	£0.00	£15.00	£0.00	£15.00	OS		
Zone 3 North East Quadrant Sustainable Urban Extension		£20.00	0.0%	£0.00	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00	OS		
Zone 4 Gainsborough West (as shown shaded green on the charging schedule map of Gainsborough)		£0.00	0.0%	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	OS		
£0 charge for apartments across all zones										
<b>CIL Charging Schedule - commercial charging zones (applicable to whole district) (charge per m<sup>2</sup>)</b>										
Convenience Retail *	Flat rate subject to indexation annually, 01st January using published RICS CIL Indexation Rate	£40.00	0.0%	£0.00	£40.00	£0.00	£40.00	OS		
All Other Uses **		£0.00	0.0%	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	OS		

\* Convenience retail is defined as everyday items including food, drink and non-durable household goods

\*\* All other uses and the £0 rate include comparison retail and retail warehousing

CIL charges subject to indexation

No change is permitted to the CIL charging schedule without a full examination by The Planning Inspectorate